

Suggested Research Ideas for Development Within the Behavior Change Consortium

Goal: Using our workgroup structure, members of the BCC are invited to assist in the identification and preparation of research proposals for cross-site BCC activities requiring further funding. This will be an item for discussion at the December, 2001 meeting, and workgroup members attending (as well as those not able to attend) should read through these suggested activities, draft some potential research projects using the template draft provided, and/or be prepared to discuss in the workgroup sessions collaborative research ideas that the BCC group is uniquely prepared to address.

Identification, Selection and Review of Key Research Projects:

- The BCC investigator charge is to develop concrete research projects that cut across the current BCC projects and workgroup activities. A mechanism needs to be established that gives all interested investigators an opportunity to contribute to this generation of research ideas. The goal is to generate a set of research ideas that can be brokered to appropriate funding sources.
- Projects will need to be selected, a project leader and group members identified. We need to formulate a selection and review process, including development of a general set of guidelines specifying types of projects to be funded and amounts of possible funding. First steps include: compilation of common assessments across sites, generation of research ideas, selection of a few research ideas, establishment of project teams, preparation of research statements, setting up an internal review process, and identification of possible funders.

Possible Topics and Funders:

- We are currently in the process of identifying possible funders. There has already been an expression of interest in the physical activity arena by RWJF. However, the range of topics covered is much broader and we wanted to generate a fuller range of research questions, both related to our other behaviors, as well as some of the cross-cutting issues represented in our other workgroups (e.g., trans-behavioral or cost-benefit assessments, treatment fidelity, RE-AIM activities, etc).
- NIH Institutes might be another potential support of funding — and we have been requested to generate a set of research ideas for discussion among NIH staff.

Potential Research Projects:

- Workgroups should generate research questions of relevance to their workgroup mission.

- The Physical Activity group has already begun to generate some ideas using a broad research framework to identify research priorities.
- The following represents some of the broad categories considered by the PA workgroup. These may be appropriate for other workgroups to consider:

Broad Research Frameworks: Given the plethora of individual research projects, it is useful to propose a set of research categories that can serve as an organizing framework for research ideas generated by PA (and other) workgroups.

Physical Activity Assessment: Can BCC evaluate different self-reported scales against each other—and against observational techniques? Also are some assessment techniques more or less effective in different populations—e.g., by age or functional status. What can be done in addition to the stages of change activity that is already underway?

Identification of common mediators: Are there a few key psychosocial mediators (e.g., self-efficacy or Social support) that impact on outcomes across interventions, populations and settings? What analyses can be done with cross-sectional versus longitudinal data?

Dose-response issues: What if anything can BCC investigators add to this debate? Can we devise treatment intensity measure and assess various outcomes across different projects, grouping similar types of interventions/populations?

Cost-benefit analyses: Can a uniform methodology be used to record costs of different intervention strategies? Can all or a subset of PA projects agree upon similar techniques to assess cost-benefit of their interventions? Can we compare outcomes across key issues such as population characteristics, treatment intensity etc.

Pilots for next generation of behavioral change research: Could investigators come together and develop new and improved interventions from their own and other BCC investigators learnings? It would be useful to have seed money available to test out these new intervention approaches—or old interventions for new behaviors or populations.